

District Review Executive Summary

Christian County School District

01/29/2006 – 02/03/2006

Robert Lovingood, Superintendent

Introduction

The Kentucky Department of Education conducted a scholastic review of the Christian County School District during the period of 01/29/2006 - 02/03/2006. Here are the most relevant facts and next step recommendations from the review.

School Deficiencies and Next Steps

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| 1. Deficiency | District leadership does not have a plan of education to address appreciation of existing cultural differences relating to sensitivity and diversity training. |
| Next Steps | District leadership should develop and implement a plan of education to address appreciation of existing cultural differences (to include job-embedded ongoing professional development) relating to sensitivity and diversity training. The plan should be developed by first considering root causes and background providing a rationale for addressing appreciation of culture and diversity. District leadership should identify a specific delivery system (a framework) that is organized for implementation that will make certain the approach is translated into schools and classrooms. District leadership should ensure that a strong support system is in place by providing professional development opportunities, research-based materials, mentoring and coaching sessions and monitoring and follow-up procedures. |
| Current Status of Progress | From evidence collected by Highly Skilled Educators: <input type="checkbox"/> Fully implemented <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially implemented <input type="checkbox"/> Not yet addressed Comments: District leadership currently has several initiatives in place to address cultural differences. Some of these initiatives include the implementation of PBS, Collaboration Training, and Cultural Diversity Training in the middle and high schools. The district has had discussions to identify possible roots causes related to cultural differences and student diversity. Data from school disciplinary referrals are now disaggregated to address and |

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| | <p>monitor cultural differences. Although cultural diversity training has begun, it has not yet resulted in a framework that impacts student diversity in all schools. In the Fall of 2007, an Education Summit was held in Christian County. National speakers and other educational leaders focused on a call to action to improve student achievement. The district has stated that KDE has taken the lead on the correction of this deficiency and they are waiting for further recommendations and directions from the Department.</p> |
| 2. Deficiency | <p>District leadership has not ensured the development of a certified staff recruitment plan that has an emphasis on minorities and highly qualified staff.</p> |
| Next Steps | <p>District leadership should ensure the development of a certified staff recruitment plan that places an emphasis on the recruitment of highly qualified applicants including minorities. District leadership should address specific approaches such as developing a quality induction program for new teachers, working with marginal staff, fully developing highly qualified teachers, teaming, mentoring, retaining quality teachers and developing the faculty as a cohesive community.</p> |
| Current Status of Progress | <p>From evidence collected by Highly Skilled Educators:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fully implemented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially implemented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not yet addressed</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>District leadership has developed a certified teacher recruitment plan. This plan addresses three areas: Identification, Recruitment, and Retention. Actions planned to address these areas include enhanced communication with area colleges, utilization of Troops to Teachers and Alternative Certification Programs, the implementation of Teacher Insight Program to screen potential applicants, subscription to the Regional Educational and Applicant Placement Program, Targeting and Recruiting Paraeducators to become certified teachers, promoting and supporting teachers to achieve National Board Teacher Certification, and developing working relationship with the College of Education, Minority Recruitment Scholarship Coordinators and Career Services Center. New Teacher Orientation and New Teacher Academy has been implemented along with an Aspiring Administrator Program. A next step for the district would be to fully develop and implement a process for improving and working with marginal teachers so quality instruction occurs in all classrooms.</p> |

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| 3. Deficiency | District leadership does not ensure training is provided on developing district and school improvement plans. |
| Next Steps | <p>District leadership should provide training on how to develop district and school improvement plans with an emphasis on how to measure impact on student achievement and to close achievement gaps among all subpopulations. District leadership should establish expectations that are clear, concise and measurable. To be able to determine progress toward goals, benchmarks of expected student performance should be discussed and included in the instructional support. Goals should be realistic in response to the factors that contributed to the needs. Goals should be measurable in that they should reflect a change in statistical data for some or all of the students. Each step to achieving district goals should either have a direct impact on students or be an important step preparing to have that impact, such as ongoing professional development and capacity-building. District leadership should ensure that the district improvement plan fully addresses the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement. Under the federal NCLB Act, a school/district must make 100% of its target goals in order to qualify as having made Adequate Yearly Progress. The district did not make AYP overall or in math and reading and made 10 out of 16 target goals. A school or district that does not make AYP for two consecutive years in the same content area, reading or mathematics, is considered a No Child Left Behind Improvement School or District. A series of consequences called Tiers is required of NCLB Improvement Schools/Districts for each subsequent year the school or district does not make overall AYP.</p> |
| Current Status of Progress | <p>From evidence collected by Highly Skilled Educators:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fully implemented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially implemented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not yet addressed</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>District leadership and school councils have been trained by KDE staff on the development of district and school improvement plans. District leadership held meetings with all school principals to review and analyze the revised improvement plans. School and district leadership have revised all improvement plans to focus on NCLB requirements. Kentucky Association of School Councils facilitated sessions in the Fall of 2007 with school councils, district leadership, and Board of Education members to analyze CATS data for revising the improvement plans. All goals for the improvement plans have been written based on student achievement and benchmarks have been added to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the goals. Learning check data is used to provide benchmarks to measure student learning. However, the learning check data is not yet showing a clear and consistent liner change in improving student achievement.</p> |

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| 4. Deficiency | District leadership has not ensured the development of a communication plan that informs stakeholders and promotes high expectations. |
| Next Steps | <p>District leadership should ensure the development of a communication plan that informs stakeholders and promotes high expectations. The plan should be widely announced and shared with stakeholders. Implicit in all communication should be an emphasis on student achievement. Research has shown that schools are more effective when staff build consensus on the aims and values of the organization, and where they put this into practice through consistent and collaborative ways of working and of decision-making. Research strongly suggests that climate and culture can have a significant effect on student motivation and academic achievement. Student satisfaction, personal growth, and achievement are highest when teacher support comes from an efficient district organization that stresses academics and strategies that emphasize mastery learning. Collective teacher efficacy has been shown to be a significant predictor of reading and math achievement; more so, in fact, than demographics. With the help of a strong communication plan, district leadership should create a sense of community and empower staff members and stakeholders to make a difference and convey the expectation that everyone has the potential to be a good team member who is excited about sharing successful practices and learning from others. This means providing time and opportunities for staff to network with each other and with other educators across schools and districts. This also means involving staff from the beginning, providing ongoing staff development, and planning for consistent follow-up, coaching and support. District leadership should monitor the implementation of the communication plan to ensure buy-in from staff.</p> |
| Current Status of Progress | <p>From evidence collected by Highly Skilled Educators:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fully implemented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially implemented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not yet addressed</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>District leadership has developed and is the process of implementing a comprehensive communication plan. A community relations committee was established and this plan was developed from surveys conducted in the Fall of 2006. The plan addresses media relations, internal communications, counseling, marketing, crisis communication, publications, community relations, and training. All district committees have been restructured to include parents and other stakeholders. A “Partners in Education” program is being developed and other avenues for community and parent involvement are being explored. An emphasis on school and district communication efforts is monitored and the district mission and</p> |

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| | <p>vision statements have been reviewed. “Connect Ed” phone program has been implemented to notify families and employees of announcements and events.</p> <p>Time and opportunity for teachers to network and collaborate on instructional practices is provided during planning period meetings, learning club meetings, and faculty meetings across the district. As climate and culture issues at the school and district level improve, student motivation and academic achievement should improve as well.</p> |
| 5. Deficiency | District leadership has not ensured that there is a focus on improving student achievement. |
| Next Steps | <p>District leadership should ensure that there is a focus on continuous improvement of student achievement. The primary responsibility for ensuring effective, ongoing, problem-solving dialogue falls to the district leadership. It is the responsibility of district leadership to coordinate the optimal use of resources toward continuous learning and improvement. With the help of school leadership they must ensure that staff development, follow-up and school improvement planning are not left to chance, but are strategically organized and implemented to promote consistently better results. District leadership should ensure that parents and other stakeholders are included in district and school improvement initiatives. District and school leadership could do this by identifying meaningful ways parents and others can help teachers improve student achievement, identifying barriers to stakeholder involvement and strategies to overcome them, by assessing culture in both the district and schools, identifying ways parents can engage other parents and stakeholders and developing an action plan to engage stakeholders in the district to improve student achievement.</p> |
| District Action Steps to Overcoming Obstacles | <p>From evidence collected by Highly Skilled Educators:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fully implemented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially implemented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not yet addressed</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>District leadership has focused improvement efforts on student achievement through the alignment of curriculum, implementation of Thoughtful Education, establishment of school leadership teams, conducting learning walks, and the implementation of Measurable Academic Progress (MAP). Math alignment has been completed and reading and writing are in progress. A schedule has been developed to complete the curriculum alignment process in the other content areas. Learning checks are administered to monitor the progress of students, and VPAT and school leadership teams conduct walkthroughs to monitor student engagement. Individual student progress is monitored in all ESS programs. Parents and community</p> |

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| | members have been involved in district committees that address PBS, ESS, ILP's, revision of graduation requirements and the Superintendent Advisory Committee. |
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Conclusion

Christian County Schools have made strides in their improvement efforts; however, there is still significant work to be done in order to improve student achievement. District leadership has acknowledged that they are not where they want to be and are working with VPAT, KDE, and others to enhance the educational program in their district.

Collaboration is central to the work in Christian County. Teachers, school leadership, district leadership and community partners collaborate to tackle almost any improvement issue. In addition to increasing their collaborative processes, the district is working to develop effective monitoring of current programs. Data drives decisions that are made and implementation of research based programs are maintained.

Leadership is focused on meeting the needs of all students not currently meeting proficiency benchmarks with an emphasis on African American students and students with disabilities. Authentic student engagement will continue to be a focus for the district in addition to building leadership capacity.

The work of the Christian County VPAT team is beginning to gain momentum. First and foremost, the trust between district leadership and other members of the VPAT team has improved significantly. This has only enhanced our work as a group and has enabled the VPAT to have the “fierce conversations” necessary to improve student achievement. The VPAT team has become increasingly focused on student achievement and has a renewed emphasis to partner with schools to assist with initiatives to increase quality instruction. VPAT members have conducted learning walks on a consistent basis to monitor student engagement and the use of best instructional practices in all middle and high school classrooms. The team meets twice monthly and the work is analyzed and reported to all stakeholders. Based upon these most recent improvements, continued growth and positive outcomes are anticipated as the VPAT in Christian County continues its mission.